

The SL Arts and Life Magazine

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j u n e 2 0 1 2

Loreen Aldrin

by

Jami Mills

Douglas Story

queried by

Cat Boccaccio

Evolution

with

Harry Bailey

fiction by

Crap Mariner





Editor's Note

by Deningun Parte

June @ r e z

Dear Readers,

As with all things in Second Life, rez is constantly changing. Some writers that have made regular contributions have left or are on hiatus, others have joined us. Our newest addition to the team is writer Gudrun Gausman, who brings us her thoughts about blue eyes in two worlds. I remember seeing a very dark avatar on marketplace, with bright blue eyes and wondered at this implausible mixing of features. Why are we so drawn to blue eyes? What, if anything, do they say about a person, and what does our apparent obsession with them say about us as a culture?

Gentleman Harry Bailey considers the evolution of dancing in SL over the years, from ballrooms with fixed poseballs to Intan menu-driven dance machines and ever more refined dances. If you are anything like me, you'll be cutting a rug quite often, and you will consider the possibilities of finding just the right animation and setting the right mood.

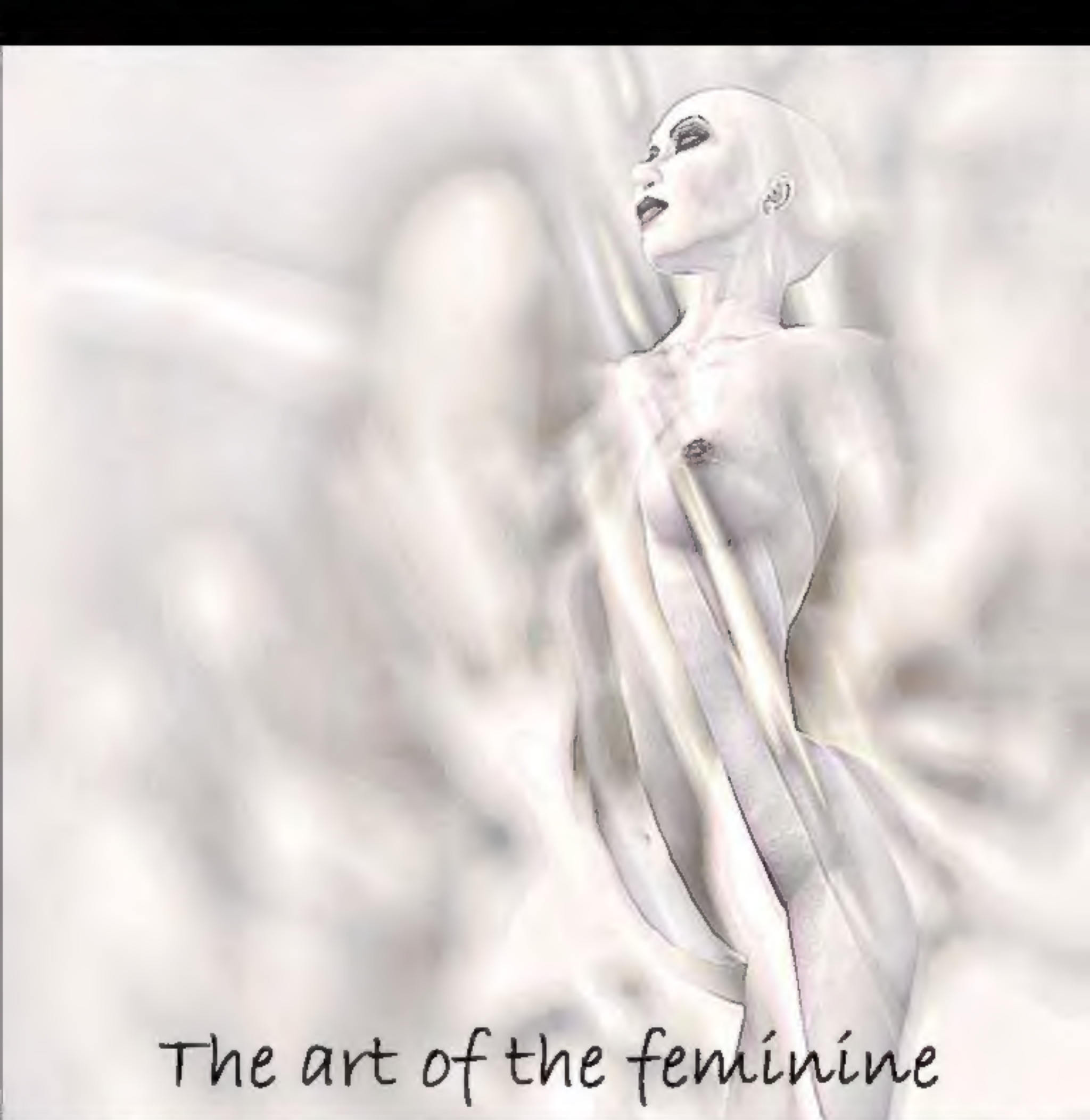
Writer/photographer Jami Mills set out for an interview with singer/songwriter Loreen Aldrin, about her life, acquiring music as a child in Siberia and growing her ability over time, sharing it with us in SL.

This month, Cat Boccaccio puts her 14 leading questions to Douglas Story, who together with Desdemona Enfield creates interactive installations that push both the boundaries of technical possibilities and those of the viewers' perception.

And finally, we have three pieces of creative writing. Crap Mariner contributed two pieces of microfiction, "For Maurice" and "Alive!", and Julianna Juliesse brought us her poem, "For Clare."

Enjoy!

Deningun Parte
Editor in Chief



The art of the feminine

SYNergy



<http://slurl.com/secondlife/Healy/180/86/103>

Cat Questionnaire : Douglas Story



by Cat Boccaccio

This month, immersive artist Douglas Story dares to answer Cat's 14 leading questions.

SL age: 5.5 years

SL activity: Creating immersive, interactive art. Or avoiding creating it.

RL location: Los Angeles

In-your-own-words bio: A happily married television professional, Douglas enjoys nature, travel, literature, cooking, RL art shows and talking about himself in the third person.

1. What in Second Life has brought you the most happiness?

Having enough success with our work that I can now state, "I am an artist" without cringing.

2. What has given you the most sadness?

The loss of my hair. Oh, you mean in SL? I miss the Not Possible In Real Life group and blog.

3. How would you describe your home in SL?

It's a cardboard box under a freeway overpass. Poor Douglas is homeless.

4. Who in SL do you admire most?

My artistic partner Desdemona Enfield, hands down. Her skill as a scripter is unparalleled and generally she's likely

the smartest person I've ever met. She's a polymath, well-read (far more so than myself) and has a wicked sense of humor.

5. What character trait do you have in Second Life that is furthest from your RL personality?

None, really. The persona you see here in SL is pretty much me in RL.

6. Which character trait did you leave behind in RL?

See the answer to #5.

7. What is your weakness when it comes to spending your Linden dollars?
Tipping live performers and DJ's. It's not shoes – that's Desdemona's department.

8. What is your favorite place in Second Life, and why?

I have a number of favorite places, but one that I return to again and again is Glyph Graves' wonderful wind sculpture. As to why... well, you can read more in the article I wrote for New World Notes last spring:

<http://nwn.blogs.com/nwn/2011/05/glyph-graves-mesmerizing-and-venerable-wind-sculpture.html>



9. What scares you the most in (or about) Second Life?

Those talking fetuses. Damn. Those things are creepy. Can you imagine if the monster from "Alien" got all chatty while inside the guy? "Enjoy your lunch mofo, cuz I'm gonna burst out of your chest and eat the entire crew. Except for Sigourney Weaver." It's just wrong.

10. What is your secret pleasure in SL?
Attending a fancy-dress art opening wearing a velociraptor avatar and threatening to devour Scottius Polke's otter. I take a childish delight in odd-ball avatars.

11. What would it take to drive you out of Second Life?

If there were a thriving subculture based on a series of badly written science fiction novels that glorified moronic machismo behavior while simultaneously denigrating women. That would suck. Especially if they didn't let the women wear shoes.

12. What one word would you use to describe the art community in SL?
Innovative.

13. What are you most proud of in SL?
Naturally that would be the body of work I've done with Desdemona.

14. If you built a sim from scratch with unlimited resources, what would it be called?

"Bob." I like palindromes.

If you would like to experience Doug and Desdemona's art, here are a few SLURLs. "Bring a friend with you," says Douglas. "Most of these are good social experiences."

D.Construct - 2011

<http://maps.secondlife.com/secondlife/Sbcc%20Explore%20lt/27/133/3501>

The Moons of Galileo - 2011

<http://maps.secondlife.com/secondlife/Sbcc%20Explore%20lt/54/61/4002>

Ripple - 2010

<http://slurl.com/secondlife/Ars%20Simulacra/152/58/1029>

Stormeye - 2009

<http://slurl.com/secondlife/Ars%20Simulacra/155/37/26>

Dynafleur - 2008

<http://slurl.com/secondlife/StellaNova/26/33/106>



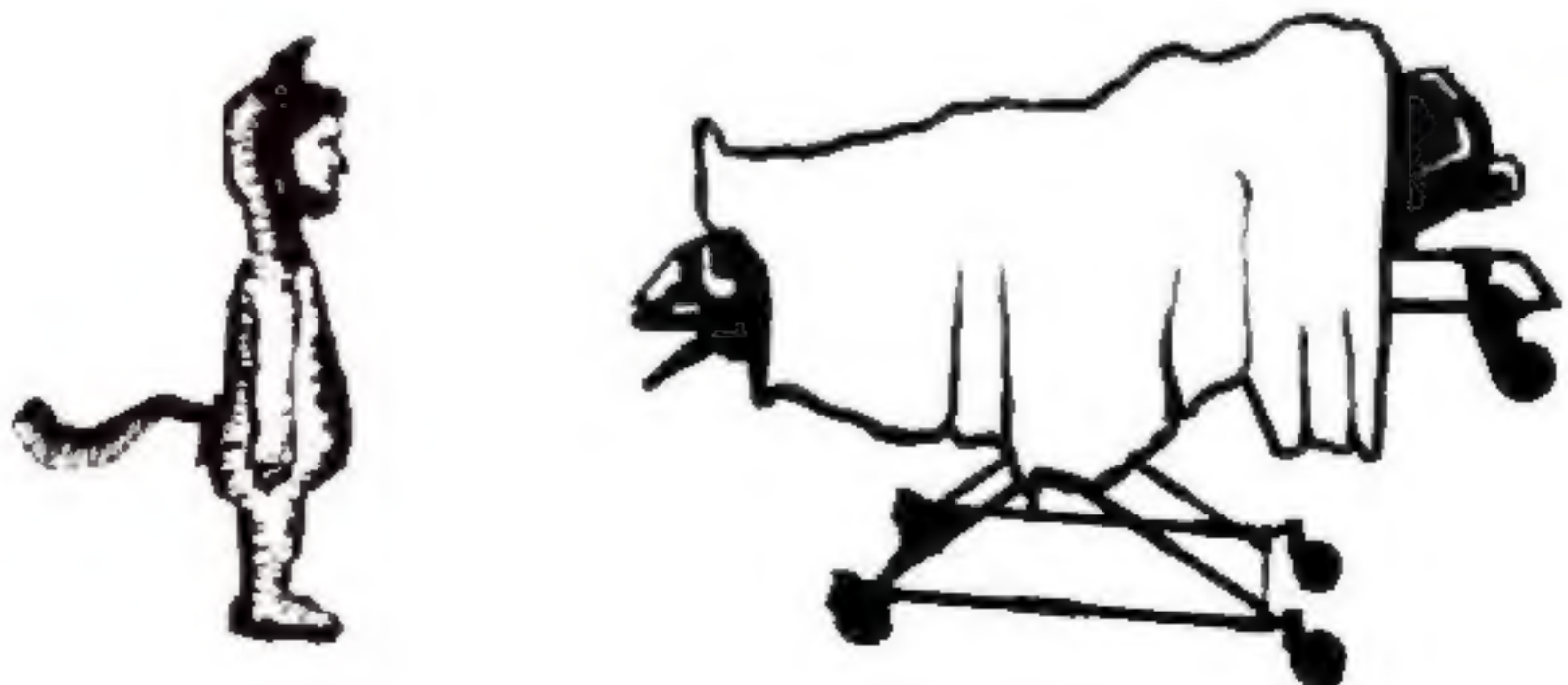
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June 18 - June 27
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(For Maurice) by Crap Mariner

The night Max wore his wolf suit
And made mischief of one kind or another
His mother called him WILD THING!
And Max said "I'll eat you up!"
While sending Max to his room
His mother had a stroke and collapsed
Max stood there, confused
He tried to wake up his mother
But she didn't move at all
So, Max picked up the telephone
And called the emergency number.
They arrived a few minutes later
Put his mother on a stretcher
Covered her with a sheet
And took her away.
Child Services picked up Max
He never wore costumes again.





Alive! by Crap Mariner

After our daughter died, the neighbors came by to express their condolences.

And they brought a large number of covered dishes. So many so, that I sketched up a few plans, converted the basement to an elaborate and functional mad scientist's lab to bring all this tuna noodle casserole to life.

Sure enough, the moment my wife threw the switch, the noodle-creature rose up and moaned: "Mommy! Daddy!"

The neighbors heard about our experiment, and arrived at the door with torches and pitchforks.

"Please stop playing God," they said. "And we want our Corningware back if you're done with it."

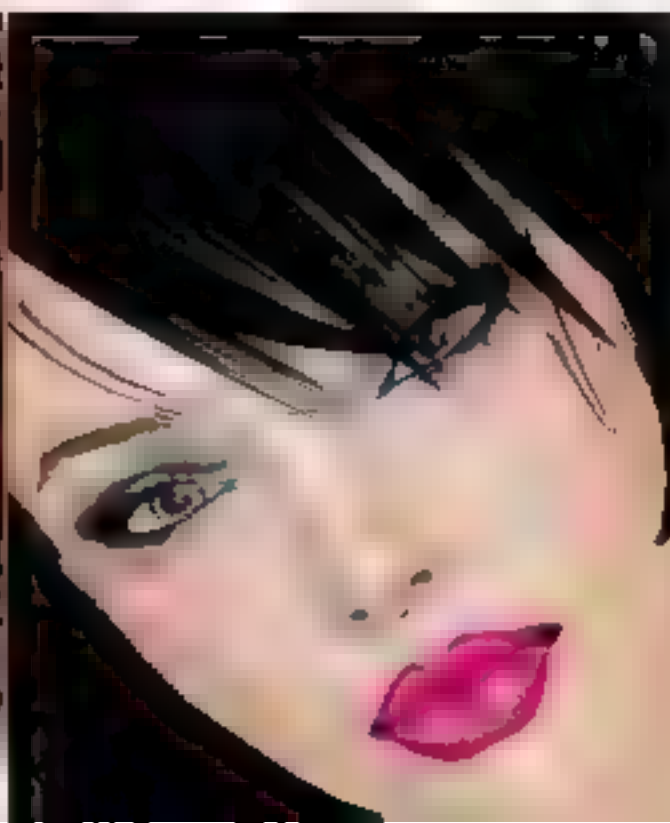
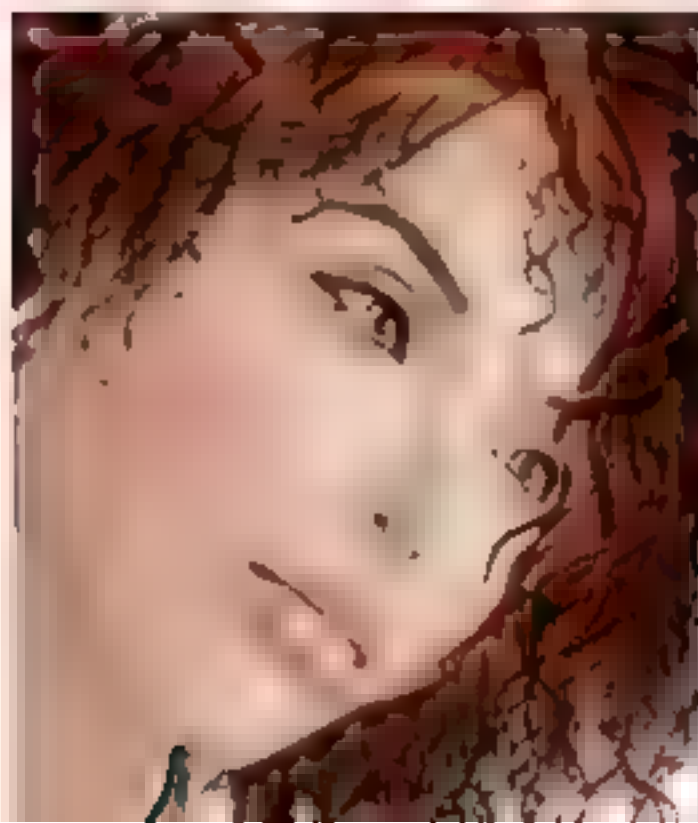
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natural shapes

by cat boccaccio

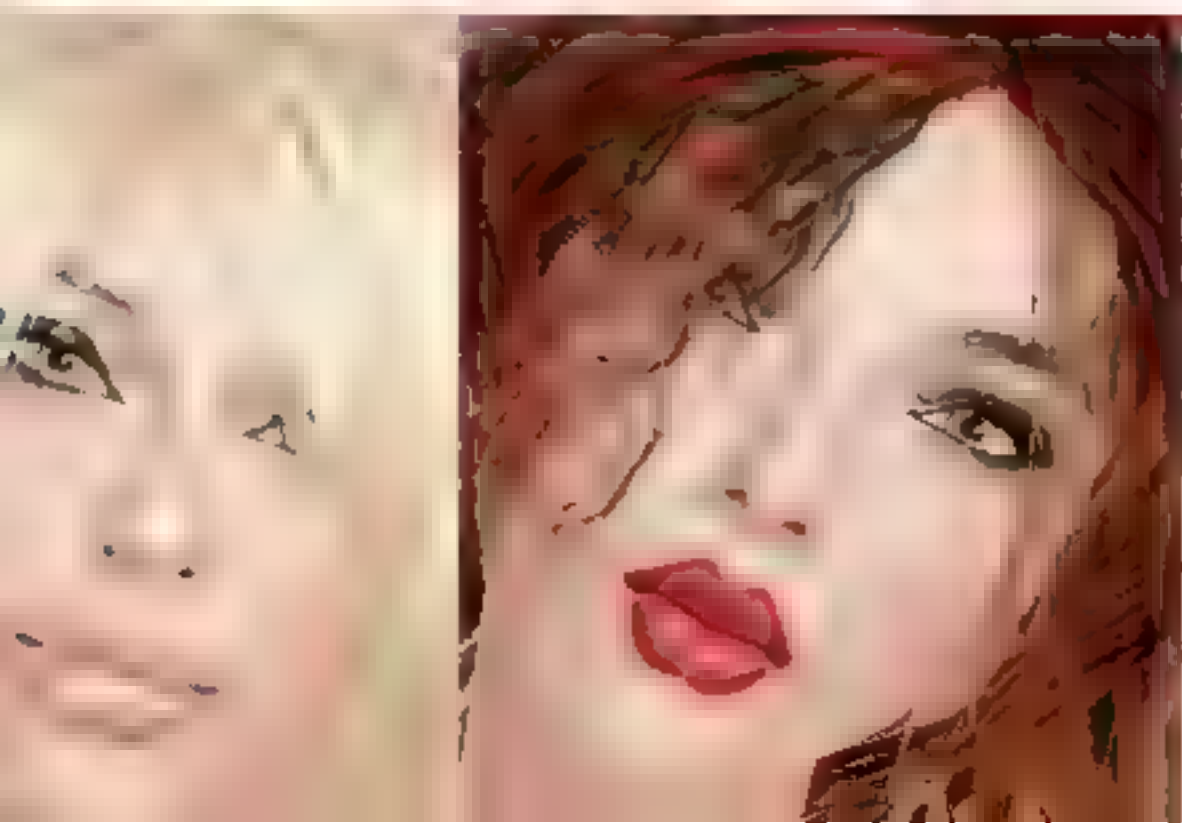
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From Russia With Soul
An Interview with Singer/Song



gwriter Loreen Aldrin

by Jami Mills

Somewhere East of the Ural Mountains, in the great plains of Siberia, was born a child of musical destiny. Some people come to music later in life, some experience that first enchantment as children. As early as Olga Zoubkova (we know her here in SL as Loreen Aldrin) can remember, she had a musical instrument in her small hands...and to this day, she's never let go. And we are the better for it. What follows is a story of a young woman growing up in the vast expanse of Russia. In the improbable and circuitous directions that life's path always seems to lead, she finds her way to the stages of the world - - and to our great fortune, the stages of Second Life. You'll get to know this unique singer/songwriter through her own words and observations below, but as with all musical talent, you have to hear Loreen to really understand her gift. Nothing is more ethereal than music. After all, it's just vibrating air. But once you hear the heart and soul that Loreen pours into her songs, you'll never be the same.

Loreen has been gracious enough to pull the curtain open on her life, as she so often does on stage. With this intimate peek into Loreen's life and loves, I hope you'll be tantalized and tempted, your musical appetite whetted. For only hearing her artistry for yourself will you truly understand this huge talent.

JM: Guten morgen, Loreen. Thank you for joining me for this chat. You were born Olga Zoubkova and grew up in Siberia, Russia. If you are older than 21, you lived in the Soviet era. I'm not the only one who's fascinated by your personal history. Please tell our readers about your family and what it was like growing up in Russia.

LA: I am 28 years old, so I indeed lived in the Soviet era :) That gave me pretty much a happy childhood, but I guess, more or less, every kid is rather happy in their own way. That's what we usually know how to appreciate once we grow up. My family...oooh. My Mom was a wonderful jazz singer. She met my Dad on stage. That's how they got together and then a little bit later married. My Dad is a children's brass woodwind orchestra conductor and my brother was a very famous Siberian pop-rock performer. I spent over 14 years playing at the music school. Technically, around 12 years though. I was 2 when I held my first instrument, a triangle. I used to drive my Dad mad, playing not really where I was supposed to, but anywhere I wanted to :))) I started to play drums a bit later on for a few years. Then I was taken to a music school and after a few years of drums (I tend to think about seven or so), I studied piano for about 10 years. After these few years

of drums, my Dad gave me an alto sax... this is a terrible accompaniment instrument. Well, surely not terrible, but pretty boring, but that's where everyone starts. I played sax from about 11 to 16.

JM: Was it difficult leaving your home?

LA: No, not really. I am an easy person to take off - - all I need I can pack in one backpack. There is just my guitar and here we go - - I am ready to go wherever it takes me :)

JM: You closed a recent show with a song you sang entirely in Russian, "Baby". You seemed to come alive while you sang it, as if an important part of you was taking flight once again. How strongly does Mother Russia still burn in your heart?

LA: Oooh, "Baby"... that song... hehehe :) Well, I wrote it back in 2005; it is one of my most favorite own songs in Russian, of which I don't have that much, unfortunately :) This song was shot in a biiiig movie! It will appear on big screens around November this year :)

JM: You seem to be Westernized through and through. You opened a recent concert with a song whose explicit lyrics, if

repeated here, might make more than a few readers blush. You are fearless in your singing, you deal with sex in a very straightforward, in-your face manner. You seem to be saying to your audience, I may shock you a little - I may titillate you some - take what you want, but I'm going to sing whatever moves me.... whatever excites me. Fair enough?

LA: I am pretty much Western in nature, that is right. Or rather, say, cos-

mopolitan. I see myself as a world citizen; there is no nation for me, only people. And sex... ummm..I had pregnant ones in my family - - guess how that happens! Sometimes I don't see anything blushing in it, that's right :) Sometimes I am rather shy and believe it or not, I blush too, although.. sex is a huge part of my being - - not the most important, but big.

JM: *You are very bold on stage, though.*



LA: Oooh, that is right. Sex sells! :) Additional to good music there should surely be some amount of excitement to feel - - some HEALTHY amount of excitement, that is. I hear people telling me that they get... certain physical reactions to my sounds... :) That's why I advise to take a towel to my show - hehehe :)

JM: **Laughs** There is a quality to your performances that I have been trying for weeks to put my finger on. You sing from your heart with little or no interference from your thoughts. You are perhaps the most authentic singer I've heard here in SL. Let me explain what I mean to those of our readers who have not had the good fortune to hear you sing. You don't mind starting a song over if the tempo isn't to your liking. If you forget an occasional lyric, well....no big deal. Perfection isn't what you're seeking. I'd say you were striving for something deeper. Honesty, perhaps? There is no pretense whatsoever in your singing, and the way you bare your heart, a truthfulness comes through very strongly. More than anything, I would say you're really a "soul" singer. Please tell us a little bit about your approach to singing, if you would.

LA: I seek for a touch - - for a connection, the more direct, the better. Every single listener is my own ear. So, I have

to... put it this slightly naughty way... I have to touch myself. That can make me start the song over again. If something I do on stage does not touch me - it is worthless, but if it does, I can be sure it touches all the others. My Dad taught me to be as selfish as it gets on stage - doing things just for myself.

JM: *You create a bond with your listeners.*

LA: That is right. They are me and I have to please myself! :D There is someone else who I am doing that for, besides my selfish self: Music. She has to be pleased, too, but she's easy and she loves all of us. It is a long-term loving relationship that I have with her. It is pretty much a marriage, hehehe :) Like every relationship, we both invest time, love, money, emotions, dedication...Not just me practicing, buying gear, strings, instruments and cables. Not just me spending time listening to her and giving all I can, but also her paying me back with the same amount of love, time, money, dedication and all that. It is a family thing for me, if I can put it best. Respect is there too, of course, and a lot of other things. Some of them are also pretty intimate.

JM: *I think Music is smiling happily at how much you have given to her.*

LA: Oooh, she does! I can feel it at times. It is such a blast of inspiration.

JM: You seem most comfortable singing ballads, and more than a few of your songs deal with love and the risks associated with loving. You bring so much emotion to your singing that one can only assume that your heart has been through the wars too. The passion you bring to your singing...the heartbreak you express...these must come from personal experiences you bring to your music.

LA: That is right. Well, recently I am very happily taken again and being absolutely excited about it :)

JM: Wonderful!

LA: However, the relation with Music is the longest one, hehehe :)

JM: Your first love!

LA: Oh, yes, and very possibly my last one, too! Sometimes I feel like I am not doing this for this first life. Something makes me feel that I have been here before and played, so if there is a choice, I will do the same thing in my next life :)

JM: The listener is probably so taken with the uniqueness of your vocal style

(*imagine a riskier Chrissie Hynde*) that some may overlook the fact that you are quite a gifted musician as well. Your guitar work is impeccable and complex, the chord structures you choose wander far afield from the typical one-four-five structure that dominates blues and rock. You include sophisticated harmonics in some of your songs, such as your original "Pick Up the Phone" and Joy Division's "Love Will Tear Us Apart". These sensuous modalities and your impressive technique underscore and support the sexiness of your vocal style. What draws you to the sambas and other Latin rhythms you seem to gravitate toward?

LA: Oh my, so many compliments, Jami! :D I am all blushing here :) I sorta always found boring following the schemes that I heard so many times. My Brother was a famous performer and I always tried to get him to show me a few chords, which he never, never did. I was so upset and angry with him that I said to myself, "then I will learn it myself! No one will ever, ever show me a single chord!"

JM: During one performance you sang a few covers of Sting songs, the most memorable being his iconic piece, "Message in a Bottle", where you gave it a nice percussive interpretation. You also gave us some tasteful guitar work



on one of his lesser known songs, "All Would Envy", about older men (whom you confessed to adoring). His songs lend themselves so well to your vocal style and you seem to really connect with his lush lyrics. Sting once said of the American singer, Eva Cassidy, that her version of "Fields of Gold" was the best version of the song he'd ever heard. I have a feeling he would be equally impressed with your interpretations of his material. What draws you to Sting?

LA: Wonderful. Ooooh, my favorite subject! I consider Sting being my biggest teacher. I mean, along with my Dad, of course. There are a few umm.. say, most significant ones and Sting taught me all I know about English language - - about the love I am supposed to put inside my music, about intonation, rhythm, psychology, physical involvement, about dreams I should have, even! I guess I spent more time with his music than with any other performer ever. He is walk-

ing encyclopedia of Music... and more to that. And yes, I adore older men, hehehe, partly because of him, too! :D And one of my biggest dreams is once to have met him and sing his own song to him. I don't dare to dream of performing together really, although it does not seem too impossible once I think of it. These pieces are so really, really, really important to me. Each note tastes and sounds and lives, the way it is supposed to be - - I get tears into my eyes when I let it flow through me. It is the purest love for me. An everlasting, mutual one, you know :) That's what I have learned from him. He taught me to love my own stuff, too, and take the process a bit seriously...Not myself though :) I enjoy to laugh about myself and on stage, too. There is something... ancient - - a few thousand years old. Something very, very old what he has inside him. It is like a never ending journey. I heard his songs so many times and every time, still, I find something new. Now you will have to stop me because I can talk about Sting forever. Using the opportunity, though, you never know, maybe he will read it: I LOVE YOU!!! THANK YOU!!! :D

JM: (Sting: call Olga straight away!)

LA: Blushes and laughs...I'd faint :)

But you can never know, right? It is a dream to be kept dreaming 'til it comes true. They all do, don't they? :)

JM: I think your dreams come true each time you sing...

LA: They do ..each and every one of them...

JM: At one of your recent concerts, you performed nothing but originals the entire night, to the audience's extreme delight! In one 2009 original (I didn't catch the title), you sing:

"Look at what you've done to me... I'm my worst enemy....I'll find another thousand words, I'll sing another thousand notes....Just to see a sparkle in your eyes....I'll sing another thousand songs...I'll be a mother to your sons.... Whatever, please, please no good-byes..."

In one of your newest songs, "Finally", you sing:

"Finally, I don't wait for the day we'll meet...I don't need anything to be saved anymore .Finally, days are shorter and longer nights...I will stand on my own all alone and the leaves will slowly gather at my door."



Many of your most beautiful originals sound a theme of independence – standing on one's own two feet – often in the wake of a romantic breakup. Your songs are very empowering. Please take us inside your writing process.

LA: Well, I used to tend to look for the inspiration sources of humankind... now that is not the case anymore, although I am still getting inspired by

my beloved ones. There was a strange but strong love story here in SL, which took a bit of me with it once it was over, but something new grew on that burned ground, of which I am really happy. And writing... is rather like... writing down. Often it feels like I am just a transmitter and nothing more. I sit, someone dictates and I write it down on paper, every now and then looking for a word to put instead of

another one... that is how the process looks like mostly. Although there are harder cases where I have to carry a song like a child, sometimes for a few months... until the right melody gets along with right words, and then I sit and write it down :)

JM: I particularly like your image of carrying a song inside you like an unborn child ... I often feel the same way when I write.

LA: It feels like it, I guess. I never carried a child yet, but I am a female and I sorta can imagine, hehehe :) It grows and once it has to be out of you, that's how it works :)

JM: Our readers are very sophisticated musically and are accustomed to learning about the tech side of performing. Your sound is very clear and rich - - you sometimes get right up on the microphone for a more intimate, breathy texture. Let's start with your guitar. In a YouTube video I recently saw, you were playing an Takamine acoustic with built-in pickups. Is that still your guitar of choice?

LA: Oooh, yes! Takamine is a gift I received from someone who really loved what I did. Pretty much all of my gear is a gift. I would not be able to afford things like these . And yes, that very

one is my baby. We grew together very tight, she has all the marks I left.

JM: What mics/amps/processing do you use for most performances, or do you play line in, directly into the board?

LA: Ummm... I have this little sound card of mine. It is M-Audio fast track ultra and normally that's my little studio mic from AKG. It is a pretty low-budget one, which is called Perception 420. But last concerts, I play my live gigs with an AKG D880. I don't use any effects or such and I'm dreaming of a loop station that my most recent musical hero, Bernhoft, uses... :)) Something tells me, I could do some great stuff with that :)

JM: I was just listening to another amazing song of Bernhoft's (Jarle Bernhoft, a wonderful talent from Oslo, Norway), "C'mon Talk" (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxoiZZ8UBEY>) where he used that very nicely. I'd love to hear you incorporate that into your concerts.

LA: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQFpWu2isj4> <-- Here is his entire concert in German Bauhaus. Please watch it! It will first blow your mind completely, and second, will be one great, great hour of your life, I guarantee. And yes - once I will get

this pedal, whenever it will be there... I will significantly increase the quality of my concerts, I think.

JM: I've heard you cover several Bernhoft songs. His songs have particular meaning for you. You really light up when you speak of Jarle's music. I particularly love your cover of his haunting song, "There is a Space in My Heart". What about it resonates so much with you?

LA: Bernhoft was my love from the first sound. I heard him about one and a half years ago and the first few seconds made me feel like quitting doing music and going to get myself a secretary job. That's how I felt for real, hahaha! :D I fell for him strongly and madly, it is, of course, for his music :) I got that point for not falling for married men :) and he has such a sweet wife and a kid, but his music got into my guts so deep that, again, now I consider him being my other greatest teacher. I had luck to see him twice live here in Hamburg, in November 2011 and very recently on April 21st. It was the second time we met each other in person and, oh boy, was I amazed! Still am. He is growing and I know he will be a worldwide star in no time. Oh, yes. Yes, yes, yes! According to my Last.fm, I listened to him over 3,000 times, and to that tune you speak about, "Space in My Heart"

in particular - let me take a look how much times (LA opens her last.fm). 2,163 times! No joking :)

JM: You are kindred spirits.

LA: We are, totally :))) Once I got something touching me, I will suck everything out of it... and make it thrice that much. He is being significant to me and there is a dream referring to him, too. I want to sing a song with him - - record a tune together... :)

JM: Your fans would love to hear that someday soon. At a recent concert at The Source (one of SL's premier live music venues), you performed one of my favorites, Radiohead's "High and Dry". It requires tremendous range and you nailed it, slipping into that beautiful falsetto of yours. Your haunting and heartbreaking version of Damian Rice's "Delicate" was particularly affecting. Then, just when we're all on the verge of tears, you lifted us up with a song like Jamiroquai's "Corner of the Earth" with its lively samba, where you break into something I might call scat singing. You used it again in White Snake's "Is This Love". Is this style of impromptu vocalization something that you spontaneously bring into your performances from time to time?

LA: I'd like to step away from your



question for a second and thank you for such a great attention to the details of music. Right now I am enjoying this so much! I never really get asked questions quite like these, that go so deep into the musical part and it is delightful to me. Coming back to your question: it is different, there are tunes I improvise a solo for, there are tunes where I pretty much copy things from the original record, like Jamiroquai and White Snake, but mostly it is a mix of both. I enjoy the improv

part, for it is my chance to share own thoughts and feelings - - the thing that classical musicians mostly don't have. All the emotions they are supposed to transmit to the audience are prescribed in the note sheets, which is to me like learning a language and only reading other people's thoughts, speak with other's words and feel... what to feel, then? Other people's emotions?

JM: But that classical background has given you the technique to let yourself go

and trust where your soul leads you.

LA: That is right. It is a strong school, especially Russian classic music school. It teaches you to feel more than other schools, I believe, but still - - for me there is a lack of, say, free will. Not that I don't love classical music - - I really do.

JM: *Well when you improvise, you are speaking with your soul... that's why I call you a "soul" singer.*

LA: That is right. I pretty much forget the world. It feels like being someplace else... so different that it feels like... an inner paradise?

JM: *I've heard you perform Tears for Fears' "Mad World" at several of your concerts (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atPbbITrqT0>). Is that one of your signature tunes? It's almost as if it was written for you (btw, your recording of that song is absolutely sensational!).*

LA: Oooh, hehehe :) A great friend of mine, ExSeraphim Eulenberg, once suggested this song to me and, well, I listened to it and found that I have heard that in the movie that is called Donnie Darko.

JM: *You have toured Europe extensive-*

ly. Your bio material states that you are doing session work in RL and have a CD about to drop. How do you balance your RL gigging with your SL performances?

LA: At daytime, I sleep. Then I go to the studio, and sometimes gig in RL. Nighttime is dedicated to song writing and to SL gigs. I sometimes sleep just 2-3 hours, sometimes a little more, sometimes less, so I can catch some rest before the gig. The best kind of rest is changing activity :)

JM: *You are managed by another well-known figure in SL music circles, Lingual Markus. (Editor's Note: Loreen is available for bookings: contact Lingual for more info.) You always thank him at every performance for giving you such wonderful support. How did you hook up with Ling and how has he helped you pursue your SL career?*

LA: Oooh, I had an enormous luck with him, really. A friend of mine, Theus Tungsten, teleported Ling to one of my early gigs. Ling said, he would be interested in managing me.

JM: *At the end of one of your recent concerts, you teased the audience by saying that you would announce something in the next few weeks that was go-*

ing to change every aspect of your life. Is there something you'd like to share with our readers at this time?

LA: Ummmm, I actually did announce it on one of my following gigs and I don't mind repeating. I already let my people know that I signed a contract with BMG somewhere early this year and now we did another step, which i don't really know how is going to change things in my life. We decided that it'd be a good idea to try for a casting show, so I went to German X-Factor and the episodes will be shot sometime early in June. I passed two call-ins. Ummmm, a call-in and a call-back they are called, I think, hehehe :)) Whatever!

JM: *That's quite exciting!*

LA: It is! I am pretty much shivering in my pants :)

JM. **Smiles* You'll have to keep us all current on that.*

LA: I would not really go for something like this but, well, something tells me that the music that I perform and write would not mind be heard by a bit bigger audience. We will see how the story unfolds. I am a bit out of the mainstream with my repertoire, but who knows? Maybe they will like some things I will do :)

JM: *I'm certain they will!*

JM: *Loreen, thank you so much for spending this time with me. I encourage all of our readers to catch one of your upcoming performances.*

LA: Ooooh, my pleasure. I will remember this interview for a long time... Oooh! To Mother Russia: it is verrrry strrrong burrrrning in me. (Rolls *all* the rrrrrs) :))

JM: **Smiles* Spasibo, Loreen. Dasvi-daniya.*

LA: Hehehe. Thanks :)

[Editor's Note: We would like to congratulate Loreen on her recent RL marriage. Here she is, still in her wedding dress, singing more beautifully than ever before. We don't need to ask why.]

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Belladonna
Couture

Modeling by
Xiomara
Lavendel

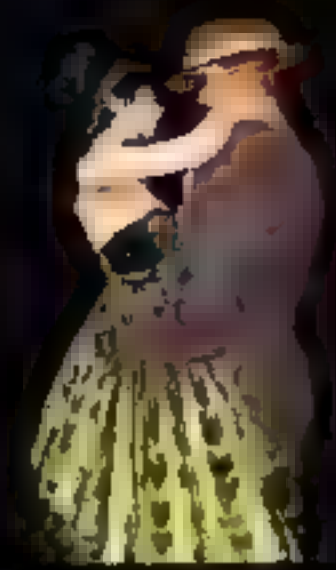
Bella
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Belladonna
Couture

Photography by
Jami Mills

Belladonna
Couture



Slow 3



Slow 6



Slow 8

The Gentleman Speaks

EVOLUTION

By Harry Bailey

EVOLUTION! A topic that engenders both excitement and fear at first glance. Especially across the Second Life grid. How many times have we lived through or heard stories of the latest “upgrade” and the challenges, not to mention experiences (i.e., drama), that come with the evolution of most SL partnerships?





None of us lives our second life with the looks we were limited to three or four years ago. Evolved skins, evolved flexprim hair and clothing, mesh, accessory detail, and even (dare I mention it) shoe technology have all evolved over the years. One of the slow, step-by-step evolutions I have experienced over the years is that of dance animations. This transition was characterized by the increased intricacy of the moves, smoother transitions, and even in their names.

If you have been around long enough you can remember back to those days before the “Intan” system, when we all danced as couples on pink and blue dance balls. Each ball set limited to one dance animation. These had “imaginative” names like “Slow 4”, “Ballroom 1” and “Tango 3”, among others. When the music shifted to a

new tune you would still be engaged with your partner in a nice embrace slowly dancing romantically to some tune like the Beach Boys’ “Barbara Ann”. Your choice was to tough it out, and lose the joy of experiencing the perfect partner in the perfect place, dancing the perfect dance to the perfect tune; or stand up from that animation set and try to hop on the appropriate one, “Swing”, for example.

Now I realize for those of you new to SL, after the advent of the Intan and other similar systems, this sounds as ridiculous as a wall phone does to a member of the Millennium generation. But the fact is, dancing has evolved in many wonderful ways over the years. Even with all the rez and connection challenges we all experience, I rarely find myself dropping my partner mid-dip, or locking

up mid-toss as often happened back in those “Olden” days.

And the dance names have also evolved. I mean really just how much more romantic is the dance name “Slow 12” than the dance named “Slow 4”? One was faced with making the split-second decision to select the proper tune to go with the mood of Nat King Cole or Natalie Cole singing “Unforgettable” in perfect tune under a perfect SL moon. “Umm...is this a ‘Slow 3’ or a ‘Slow 9’”? Your mood has been lost to the challenges of engaging the analytical side of your brain to reason out the solution.

Fortunately, the newer dance names have evolved along with the dances to move you past that abyss. “Ahh....wonderful romantic tune . . . Do I see my partner as a ‘White Orchid’ or should I lose myself in her ‘Angel Eyes’”?

As with all evolution, however, these enhancements come at cost. The more dances and the more names, the more there is to learn to become the perfect dance partner. When the choices were “Slow 1” through “Slow 7” back in the early days, you could be safe on almost any slow beat song with any of those.

I mean, they named them ‘slow’ for a reason, right? For the fast tunes, you used to have your choice of “Swing” or “Western Swing”. Again, not too complicated and I know some will take issue with me on this, but if you were in a Country Western venue, you chose “Western Swing”. If not, then you’d go for “Swing”. Simple and effective. And if you wanted to look good in a formal venue, then “Ballroom 1” was always the correct choice!

Then SL dancing began evolving. At first we found a few simple names like “Together” and “Jive Star”. Ok, we can handle this. “Jive Star” goes with those Travolta moves and “Together” fits all those sock hop tunes we loved back in the ‘50s and ‘60s. (Yes, I know I date myself here, but I admit I did dance in a high school gym one romantic evening with the teen who would become my wife, socks and all, to four live bands, all with #1 hits, much like the scene in Grease.) But I digress.

Once the dance (r)evolution began, it became a dance animation marathon. We were treated to names like “Heartbeat”, “Heartbreaker”, “Follow Me”, “Desire”, “Worship”, “TeaseMePls”, “Love Fight”, “Fallin Love”, “Our



Angel Eyes

Love”, “Evergreen”, and many many more. We were now faced with an array of choices. For romantic encounters would we prefer “Love Fight”, “Our Love”, or “Fallin Love”? Should I chose the “Evergreen” dance, or is that only

for Christmas? So many decisions to make and only a moment to decide! YIKES! By the way, that “Evergreen” dance, while working well to the tune “Santa Baby”, is also one of the more romantic dances in my opinion.

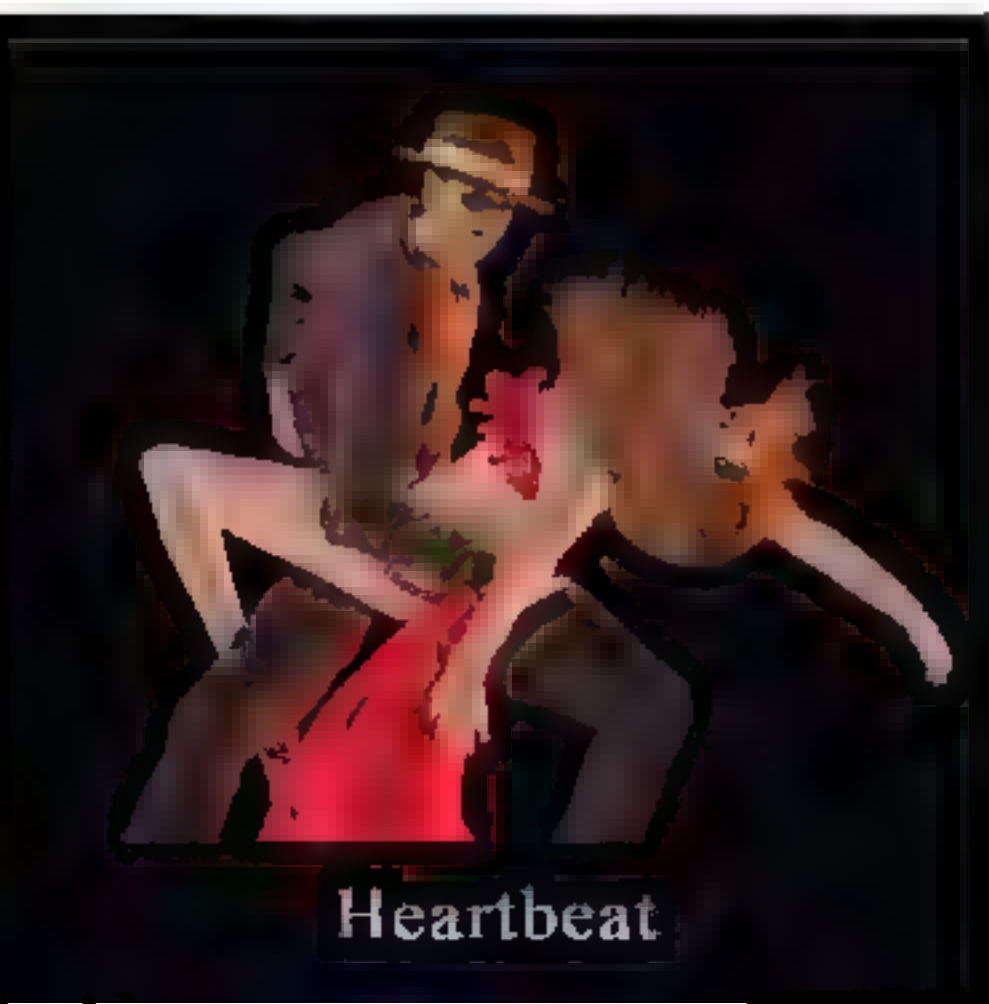
While the various dance systems, such as the Intan, have made the dance choices menu-driven, it's also left us with several pages of menu to walk through in search of that perfect dance. Unfortunately, even on my own home Intan I am guilty of not placing dances with the same tempos on the same pages. And for some reason lately, SL seems to take joy in mixing up my dance menus, adding to the difficulty of finding the wanted dance. Yet in spite of this, we also are provided a dance hud on our screens at all times, allowing access to the menu, and instant syncing of the partners at the touch of a button.

One of the first tips to adapting to the dance evolution in SL is to take the time to learn the Intan dance menus

at your favorite dance venues. Usually, a good club will have at least 15-30 dances on their system, and some even do group them by genre. Once you know the dance menu locations, you are ahead of most and have the ability to quickly adapt to the change of music and tempo throughout the evening. Advanced dancers can keep that menu up and be ready to shift dance mid-song when the song tempo changes.

The next step is to learn how the animations move to the tempos. Basically, there are about four dance tempos that most dances fall into: slow and romantic, mid-tempo sultry, fast upbeat, and Latin. Now others might think this is oversimplification and would find many other categories (okay, even I will admit the macarena and YMCA are outliers); however, let's not get too over evolved yet and just take time to stop and enjoy what we have at the moment please.

One of the best ways to learn the dances and to what music they fit is to just get out and dance. Even if you don't want to go dancing until you know more, find a friend to go shopping with you and window-shop the various dance



vendors. Really it is not that different from shopping for hair or shoes. Hop on the demo dances with your shopping partner and then think of what sort of music this dance seems to fit. I have always had a wonderful time going out to test drive dances with both old and new friends.

Now at this point you might begin to wonder if this article is going to continue as a primer on how to use the Intan or how to shop for dances. Certainly NOT! This article is all about evolution, and the point of dance system evolution across SL is to help evolve interpersonal relationships across SL. The delicacy and differentiation that is now available in SL dancing is the "Butterfly" that has emerged out of the cocoon.

True beauty and romance are there at the calling....at the touch of a menu...once you master the dance in SL. A night's dancing can become a multi-act play of romance and intrigue, not sitting, standing, moving, sitting, rezzing, standing, moving, running over people and once again sitting as in years gone by. The Butterfly has emerged and, yes, there is even a "Butterfly" dance out there. Does




the song begin "I'm in the mood for love" perhaps? Then perhaps "Falling Deep" is the tune of the moment. Did your partner put you on a dance move you don't care for and now the song "Straighten Up and Fly Right" you requested of that friendly DJ has come up. Then "Together" is the dance for you. Arm's length there partner! Remember, we're here together but let's not get carried away yet.

Many subtle messages are available for dancing your way across SL once you take the time to listen, watch, learn and enjoy the possibilities. Remember all those slow dances from "Slow 3" on up. Once you have that dance partner you enjoy and trust, take the time to dance through all of those to discover the subtle differences. Each of

those wonderful slow animations has a place on your SL dance cards from night to night. Just because they have not evolved the names doesn't mean the species should be given up. Like that prehistoric survivor, the tortoise - those slow but steady dances still are wonderful competitors on any dance floor. Oldies but goodies always exist in any evolutionary process and many here will tell you "Slow 3" is still the last dance of choice for any romantic evening.

One remaining challenge is that some dances just can't be matched to the the music. No matter how hard I try, I've never found the appropriate dance for Raffi's "Banana Phone"! On the other hand, there are so many amazing singles and group dances now that are designed to match specific songs. This makes an evening or dancing group all the more fun. We have "Macarena", "Chicken Dance", "YMCA" and Conga lines across SL now in group dance settings. While you may agree or disagree that this is evolution, it is without doubt changing and moving at an astonishing pace. One of my good SL friends Kaejae Truss now has almost 2,000 dances on her menu-driven group hud! Now that is a dance evolution beyond imagination a few years ago. One of these days





I hope to grab Kaejae for an evening and have her tell her own personal SL dance history.

I hope this month you take the time to rediscover the "ART" of the dance with one or more partners as you traverse this most wonderful Second Life. Remember the joy of any SL experience is being in the right place with the right company, engaging as many of the senses as possible. Should you find yourself in need of a dance partner, this Perfect Gentleman is always happy to share a dance and make new friends across this second life and this first life globe. I look forward to sharing the pleasure of the dance art evolution with you and, who knows? Perhaps one day we shall find that dance that goes with "Banana Phone"! Okay, well...perhaps NOT!

God save the Queen!



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ABZELLE

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by Gudrun Gausman

Fact: 87.5% of all statistics are made up, just so you know.

Fact: Most people in the world (95%) have brown eyes.

Fact: Most of the actors you see close-ups of in movies (95%) have blue eyes, even if they are supposed to be Arab, African, or Asian.

Question: What's up with this?

Answer: Hollywood, and everyone else, seems to have an unspoken but obvious standard of beauty.

Ol' Blue Eyes, Indeed!

I laugh about this one: "With a curvaceous figure that Venus would have envied, a tanned, unblemished oval face framed with lustrous thick light brown hair, deep-blue eyes fringed with long black lashes, perfect teeth, and a small straight nose, she had a beauty that defied description." What?

So I guess blue eyes are part of a beauty standard? Is beauty an idealized form of the characteristics of the general population, something everyone can relate to? I don't think so. Do blue eyes show something other eyes don't? Or is it that unusual eyes are interesting and beautiful? And what happens when the usual becomes unusual, or vice-versa?

Beauty: Is it culturally determined? To some extent, for sure. For example, Leslie Caron was considered a great beauty. To me she looked exactly like a Frog, especially when she smiled. Oh, boy! I can't believe I said that out loud! Me is gonna hafta get some Freedom Fries to compensate.

But we don't seem to learn beauty standards. Even infants are happier with more attractive caregivers than with those who unattractive ones. This is true with infants as young as one or two months. And it's not attributable to scent, or whatever. In one study of one year-olds, caregivers wearing attractive/unattractive masks produced the same result: the more attractive masks elicited a favorable response; the less attractive ones, crying. These findings are consistent with the personal experiences and observations of many parents of small children, who find that their children are much better behaved when their babysitters are physically attractive than when they are not. Seems like babies are born with an eye for beauty. Infants only hours old will choose to stare at an attractive face rather than an unattractive one, just like they prefer to listen to Vivaldi straight, rather than Vivaldi backwards.

But what is attractive? It seems to take symmetry, average appearance, and secondary sexual characteristics.

Is that a stereotypic human face? Attractive people seem healthier and more physically fit, and they live longer too. Good news for millions: average is pretty. The downer: you must be physically fit.

I will stick with facial features. Wait! What about blue eyes?

The ideal of female beauty seems to be blond hair and blue eyes. Women have been dying their fair hair blond as far back as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This means that women were dying their hair blond long before peroxide was even discovered.

The ideal image of beauty determines how society reacts to us as humans, and how we perceive these reactions as well. For most people, concepts of the body and beauty come to the fore in early adolescence. By the end of teenage years, these notions have developed into a self-image, right along with all of the stereotypes.

Preference for blue eyes seems to be

accepted as an ideal in the West. Blue eyes are not just considered to be attractive for women but for men as well. Going by Hollywood movies, that is totally the case. Or is it?

As I said, 95% of movie stars seem to be blue eyed. And if you look closely, this was also true before color filming became preponderant.

Whence blue eyes? A Danish researcher theorizes that all blue-eyed people have a common ancestor (probably a Dane?) who, about 10,000 years ago, began to spread a mutant gene throughout Europe and the Middle East. This resulted in what I like to call the European "Blue-Belt."

Why blue eyes? The Czechs did a study, and the Czech Republic is "sort of" in the Blue Belt. Not that they aren't as pretty as anyone else. In that study, brown-eyed men were ranked as more dominant than blue-eyed men by both men and women. And the same men were rated as most dominant even when they got blue eyes



courtesy of Photoshop. The blue-eyed guys, however, were still ranked lower in dominance, even after receiving their brown eye makeovers. So there was more than eye-color involved in the male rankings. The female rankings, on the other hand, showed no difference on the basis of eye color.

Does something in the facial structure of brown-eyed men make them appear more dominant? In general, the brown-eyed men in the study had wider jaws and bigger noses than the blue-eyed men. One possible explanation is that brown-eyed men may actually have higher testosterone lev-

els. Several studies have shown that women prefer to mate with high-dominance males, but they prefer low dominance males as life partners. Maybe Czech ladies just like Turks as lovers?

No, not just Czechs. Men often seek women with blue eyes, but women often don't seek them in men. Not only do women have different selection criteria like social status, wealth, and, of course, testosterone, blue-eyed men also tend to look more feminine. This means that men will often select for blue eyes and women will often select against them, not because they find blue eyes unattractive, but because blue-eyed men tend to look boyish and gender-ambiguous. Or because the brown-eyed guy is richer.

So why the Hollywood propensity for blue eyes in males as well as females? Bright, colorful, unusual, and exotic eye colors are always considered intriguing - or scary.

Once common in the boy and girl next

door, blue eyes have become increasingly rare among Americans. Immigration patterns, intermarriage, and genetics have all played a part in the steady reduction of their numbers. About half of Americans born circa 1900 had blue eyes. By the 1950s that proportion had dropped to a third. Today only about one 1 of every 6 Americans has blue eyes. Much of this change has to do with marriage patterns. One hundred years ago, 80 percent of people married within their ethnic groups. Blue eyes, a genetically recessive trait, were routinely passed down, especially among people of English, Irish, and northern European ancestry.

By mid-century, one's education and prospects became the primary factors in obtaining a spouse. We all know how many 1950s coeds went to college seeking their MRS. As intermarriage among ethnic groups became the norm, blue eyes began to be replaced by brown.

The influx of non-whites into the

United States, especially from Latin America and Asia, accelerated the disappearance of blue. Between 1900 and 1950, only about 1 in 10 Americans was non white. Today that ratio is more like 1 in 3.

However, the preference for fair skin and blue eyes stretches back in Europe to at least the Middle Ages. For women in particular, especially those of European descent, fair skin and light eyes have long been seen as a measure of fertility and beauty. We need only check out Renaissance, and earlier, paintings to verify this assertion. Or check out Jesus' mom at your nearest Catholic Church.

America adopted these European biases as immigrants poured in, and Hollywood reinforced them by providing a long line of blue-eyed blondes as the nation's and the world's sex symbols.

Eugenics was the racist pseudoscience determined to wipe away all human beings deemed "unfit," preserving

only those who conformed to an ideal. In the 1930s, eugenicists used the apparent disappearance of blue eyes as a rallying cry to support immigration restrictions in the United States. But oddly the eugenicists themselves rarely conformed to the ideal. On the world stage, Hitler himself didn't have blue eyes. Nor did Mussolini. Or Tojo.

Nevertheless, Americans were consumed with the blue-eyed, fair-haired ideal. In the '70s and '80s, most fashion models were Scandinavian. But in the past decade those standards have begun to change. People now, as then, want a look they can relate to, and trend-makers have noticed. The look today favors honey-colored skin, brown hair, and green or brown eyes, and the most successful models seem to be coming from Brazil. I heard Angelina Jolie used brown contacts in a recent film.

But even as blue eyes give way to brown, lighter eyes will maintain a certain allure. When people see

something pleasurable, their eyes dilate. Dilated pupils signal happiness and are, in turn, considered attractive. Since they are easier to see in lighter eyes, especially on film, they have a natural appeal. Once again, this all goes back to acting ability. I'm talking to YOU, Frank!

And now for Second Life Eyes. Of course things are somewhat different in here. Not only can SL residents alter their physical traits at will, we also have a lot more eye colors to choose from. "Exotic and unusual" takes on a whole new meaning in this environment. The most important thing is to look different than any other woman in the room. But how different can you be and still be desirable in a normal sense? That takes skill.

Anyway, blue is less common than brown in RL. What are the Real Life eye connotations of eye color? Here's a list:

Black - Intuitive, sensual, and secre-

tive.

Blue - Direct and vital with a gift for insight (possibly psychic) and observation.

Brown - Earth energized, creative, simple, humble, with strength, endurance, and fertility.

Gray - Connotations of water, weather, changeability, mysticism, and wisdom.

Green -. Connotations of life-force, vegetation, rejuvenation, youthfulness, and health.

Hazel - Hazel is an exciting combination of the inner strength and independence of brown, the compassion and healing qualities of green, the fluidity and sensitivity of gray, and the intense vitality of blue.

Violet - An exquisite and sophisti-

cated color that has connotations of spirituality, nobility, psychic energy, and purity.

Colors available in Second Life? You can do any color you want. You can make your eyes as luminous or as weird as you want. You can be the one alluring Asian or African in a room full of blue eyes. But I'm betting the most used color is still blue. And your Second Life popularity will be directly related to your fashion and color sense and, most of all, your conscious or subliminal acting ability.

But wait! When will SL incorporate Blue Eyes technology? This means computers with sensory abilities like those of human beings. Imagine a computer that can listen to you, feel your emotions, and evaluate your moods through special technologies. That's what Blue Eyes is supposed to be. ("Blue" is for Bluetooth wireless; "eyes" is for eye movement providing the most important information.) Okay, I guess that's the next release.



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Jami Mills

Photography



For Clare

by Jullianna Juliesse

I wanted to be just like you.

so young then,
your tangled long curls
over the collar
of your worn
fatigue coat,
the tattered sneakers Sister Joan
sent you home for wearing,
the heady smell
of clove cigarettes,
paint, and turpentine,
you and I
painting and devising dreams.

But I was never so brave.

Wrapped myself in duty
and the cloak of public opinion--

while you failed French,
sold your first canvas at age 16,
won the four-year ride to art
school,
and left a year later--
to have your son.

I've been afraid
to see you--
not knowing what to say,
now that you've become
something mortal

someone, like the rest of us.

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